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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4749
INFO RUEHBS/AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS 0143
RUEHJB/AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA 0149
RUEHDR/AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM 0962
RUEHKM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA 1718
RUEHKI/AMEMBASSY KINSHASA 0291
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0111
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0331

C O N F I D E N T I A L KIGALI 000899

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TAGS: [PINS](#) [PINR](#) [PREF](#) [MOPS](#) [RW](#)
SUBJECT: FDLR FIRES INTO AND/OR FROM RWANDA

REF: A. KIGALI 0792
[1](#)B. KIGALI 0238

Classified By: Ambassador Michael R. Arietti, reason 1.4 (B/D)

[1](#)1. (C) According to Rwandan military sources, late on the evening of September 30, a small force of suspected Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) soldiers fired several hundred machine gun rounds into Rwanda from positions on the Congolese side of the border, in a remote area several miles to the north of the Goma/Gisenyi border crossing. No injuries or loss of life occurred. According to these sources, no FDLR soldiers entered Rwandan territory, the firing apparently an attempt to provoke a response from Rwandan forces and draw them across the border (see ref B for a similar event in March). These sources confirmed local press accounts of the incident, in which several hundred shell casing were reported to have been found on October 1, and local military commanders and civilian officials rushed to reassure residents of a nearby village that their security was not at risk.

[1](#)2. (C) However, some Rwandan spokesmen gave conflicting versions of the attack in statements to the international media and individual members of the diplomatic corps, saying that FDLR forces had either attempted to enter Rwandan territory or had briefly done so. For example, Great Lakes Envoy Ambassador Richard Sezibera told the BBC October 3 that FDLR forces had tried to launch an attack on Rwanda, had failed, and had retreated. Internal Security Secretary General Ambassador Joseph Mutaboba told pol/econ chief October 3 a similar story, saying the Rwandan Defense Forces had repelled the FDLR at the border. In extended comments to Ambassador Arietti, also on October 3, Chief of External Security at the National Security Service Joseph Nzabamwita said a company of FDLR had actually penetrated Rwandan territory, remained for a period of time, firing their weapons, and then recrossed the border without interdiction by Rwandan forces.

[1](#)3. (C) Nzabamwita said that the Rwandan Defense Forces had standing orders not to cross the Congolese border, and had not done so in pursuit of the FDLR force. "They want to pull us in," he said, "and we will not cross." He expressed considerable frustration with the "complete disarray" on the Congolese side of the border, noting the FDLR force had passed through Congolese army lines both to reach Rwandan territory and to retreat from it. He said the Congolese government had still not appointed any members to serve on the recently-revived Joint Verification Commission, and thus no official body was in place to investigate the incident.

14. (C) Comment. To our knowledge, aside from Sezibera's comments to the BBC, the Rwandan government has not issued any formal statements on the FDLR incident. Although Mutaboba and Nzabamwita expressed to us individually their considerable frustration at the event, and what they consider a lack of international interest in FDLR actions, the Rwandan government itself remains institutionally quiet, making little effort to publicize the incident or demand international attention. For such a well-disciplined government, Sezibera's and Mutaboba's messages conflict with Nzabamwita's comments to the Ambassador on the exact nature of the attack -- a curious breach of coordination. The attack itself appears to have been minor, but troubling, particularly given earlier GOR concern that the FDLR may be moving closer to the Rwandan border (ref A). End comment.
ARIETTI